

WI AQUAPONICS MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT GROUP

February 12, 2013 Conference Call

WISLINE Call Facilitator – WDNR Chris Lilek

Participants: Jim Held-UWEX, Amy Basel-DATCP, Mark Aquino, Dan Bauman & Chris Lilek-DNR, Professor Chris Hartleb-UW-Stevens Point, Cate Rahmlow-WEDC, Tim Boose – Prescott, WI.

The purpose of this call was to continue our discussion how Federal, State and County regulatory, funding & technical assistance staff can support aquaponic farming in Wisconsin.

Future purpose: We want to be able to offer local aquaponics contacts an easy to use method of getting Federal, State & County regulatory, funding and technical assistance in the future.

To further this purpose we have scheduled monthly conference calls to update ourselves on the latest regulatory, funding and technical assistance available to local contacts and then get this information out to the local contacts and aquaponic associations as efficiently as possible.

We want the aquaponics industry to succeed and grow in Wisconsin.

The next conference call is scheduled **for March 12, 2013 from 10 – 11:30am.**

Conference call in number: (630) 424-2356, Passcode 6550 444#

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

EDUCATION

TALENT

TECHNOLOGY

ECONOMICS

RESOURCE

FARMS & SUPPLIERS

INSPIRATION

EDUCATION

Education options are expanding into many different areas:

Professor Chris Hartleb, UW- Stevens Point let us know that individuals can still sign up (until Feb 27th) for the UW-Stevens Point's "Principles of Aquaponics" (2-credit course with online lectures only) and Introduction to Aquaponics (3-credit course that utilizes online lectures and has a 3-day hands-on workshop in mid-May). Chris said that last year 27 individuals registered for these courses and this year they have 59 individuals registered.

UW-Stevens Point is hosting the International Aquaponics Conference, June 19-21, 2013 which is in support of the International Aquaponics Society that focuses on commercial aquaponics. Chris said that registered individuals are coming from 5 different countries and 11 different states. More information can be found at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/conted/ConfWrkShp/Pages/AquaponicsConf.aspx>

Nelson and Pade, Inc. offers numerous workshops, a Job Shadow program and an Extended Stay Learning Program. Details are available at: <http://aquaponics.com/page/workshops-and-training>
Nelson and Pade, Inc., offers workshops and training courses on aquaponics and controlled environment agriculture. Rebecca Nelson and John Pade have been doing aquaponics since the early 1990's and controlled

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environment agriculture since the mid 1980's. They had had individuals from 30 countries and 29 US states attend their training programs.

TALENT

An aquaponics fact sheet by Jim Held-UW EX will be made available to participants of the March 1 & 2, 2013 Aquaponics Conference in Pewaukee, Wisconsin.

https://secure.wisconsinaquaculture.com/Events_Details.cfm?RID=40

Jim Held's UW Extension position funding will end on June 30, 2013; unless new funds become available.

Cate Rahmlow – WEDC said the Aquaculture Industry Group has discussed the potential for UW-Stevens Point to become the State Identified Industry Support Advocate for Aquaponics. Call participants were asked to seek additional funding ideas.

TECHNOLOGY

Nelson and Pade, Inc has clients around the world using their highly efficient Clear Flow Aquaponic Systems® to raise fish and vegetables in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable manner. Their patent-pending ZDEP (near Zero Discharge-Extra Production) filtration system has nearly eliminated waste discharge and increased plant production nearly 4 times.

Not discussed during this call.

ECONOMICS

The group wants to help make aquaponic farming a sustainable business in Wisconsin. In order to do that we need to provide: an economic model for business start-ups, loans/grants, community economic development support, marketing resources, and insurance options.

Profitability

Action Item: In the last meeting, we discussed the need for an Urban and also a RURAL economic model, in order to predict if aquaponics will be profitable in Wisconsin.

The call participants agreed that each proposed aquaponics farm's business plan is unique to its location and proposed growing/marketing plan. Jim Held and Nelson & Pade can help put these types of business proposals together. Nelson & Pade do charge a fee for their services.

Jim Held reported that a Fish Farm Modeling project has been funded by the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) as part of their base funding for aquaculture extension. It would be a compilation of external resources and existing economic models for aquaculture. The intent of the project is to develop a comprehensive economic model that has the flexibility to address a wide variety of systems and products. Expected completion of the project is 2015.

Loans

Action Item: Jim Held and Carol Nagel FSA-USDA will be meeting with Hayward Bait to check if \$300,000 could be obtained through USDA Operating Loan. Chris Lilek confirmed that AgStar can provide low interest rate loans for fish hatcheries. Micro loans are now available from USDA for farm start-ups; including aquaponic farms. <http://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/USDAOA-670c60>

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RESOURCES

Action Item: DNR will work on furthering aquaponics education of regulatory field staff. The call participants agreed that DNR staff visits to aquaponic farms such as Nelson & Pade, Sweet Water, KP's Simply Fresh, and others would be the best way to learn about the current aquaponics industry. Chris Lilek & Mark Aquino – DNR will work on this effort.

When DATCP fish inspectors visit a fish farm, they will ask the farmers about their record keeping and may ask to see their fish health certificate; if they have stocked/imported Nonnative fish. The new on-line DNR stocked/nonnative fish import permits have a reminder for permittees to print off a copy of the permit they filled out on-line.

2700 fish farm renewal licenses were processed by Amy Basel-DATCP this week. This is approximately the same number processed last year. The call participants were wondering if there is a way of collecting aquaponics fish farm numbers through the fish farm license form. Amy said she would check with Dr. Kebus and other DATCP staff.

Green Tier Program can help established aquaponics farming reduce waste, increase efficiencies and expand market opportunities. The DNR's Green Tier website is located at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/GreenTier/> Program participants must agree to establish an environmental management system within 12 months of being accepted into the program. <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/co/CO503.pdf>

AQUAPONIC FARMS & SUPPLIERS

Demonstration

Sweet Water Urban Farm, Milwaukee, WI
Nelson and Pade, Inc., Montello, WI 53949

Pilot Projects

Grow Local LLC, Neenah, WI

Family Farms

Natural Green Farms, Racine WI

Production Farms

Sweet Water Urban Farm, Milwaukee, WI
Growing Power, Milwaukee, WI
Aqua Terra Farms, Bristol, WI
Future Farm, Baldwin, WI
KP Simply Fresh, North Freedom, WI
Nelson and Pade, Inc., Montello, WI 53949

Action Item: The call participants agreed a complete list of aquaponic facilities in Wisconsin would be helpful for a future reference. Chris Lilek, Jim Held and Rebecca Nelson will work on this during break time at the Aquaculture Conference, Pewaukee, WI March 1 & 2, 2013

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Suppliers

Nelson and Pade, Inc, Montello, WI, www.aquaponics.com offers complete aquaponic system packages, growing supplies, training and technical support to prospective and existing aquaponic growers.

<http://aquaponics.com/page/aquaponic-systems>

http://www.indianafishfarming.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=34%253Aworkshops&id=54%253Asuppliers&Itemid=66

<https://www.was.org/shopping/shopdisplaycategories.asp>

INSPIRATIONS

New Alchemy Farm – West Allis, Wisconsin would like to invite our group to visit their farm in the near future. **James Godsil** will contact them and schedule a day & time convenient for them.

Abraham Lincoln's address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 30, 1859 Quote:

“But the chief use of Agricultural Fairs is to aid in improving the great calling of Agriculture, in all its departments, and minute divisions; to make mutual exchange of agricultural discovery, information, and knowledge; so that, at the end, all may know everything, which may have been known to but one, or to but few, at the beginning; to bring together, especially, all which is supposed to be not generally known, because of recent discovery or invention.”

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/lincolns-agricultural-legacy>